Forgotten Founders, Fractured Dreams

The Betrayal of Pakistan's Minority Architects

https://enamoured.substack.com/p/forgotten-founders-fractured-dreams

This post is the sequel to my earlier work: "Promises on Paper, Blood on the Streets ...The Silent War Against Pakistan's Minorities".

The soil of Pakistan was consecrated not by the blood of one people but by the collective sacrifice of Hindus drafting its first laws, Christians defending its skies, Parsis building its ports, and Sikhs nurturing its soul; a covenant sworn in the name of Jinnah's secular vision, now buried beneath the rubble of broken promises.

In the fevered days before Partition, Alvin Robert Cornelius, the Roman Catholic jurist, parsed Islamic texts beside Muslim League leaders, his pen weaving minority safeguards into Pakistan's legal DNA. His landmark judgments; shielding Hindus from discriminatory laws, dissenting against martial tyranny, would later be trampled by the boots of those he helped empower. Nearby stood Jogendra Nath Mandal, the Dalit revolutionary whose hands drafted labor reforms as Law Minister, only to resign in 1950 when mobs began hunting his community across East Bengal.

The Parsi visionary Ardeshir Cowasjee chronicled the state's moral decay from Karachi's newsrooms, his columns a lighthouse against corruption until his voice was drowned by the rising tide of intolerance.

The armed forces' cradle was rocked by British Christian hands: General Frank Messervy structuring the fledgling army, Brigadier Francis Ingall erecting the Pakistan Military Academy brick by brick, Air Vice Marshal Allan Perry-Keene sculpting the PAF's wings.

They bequeathed not colonial relics but institutions where Flight Lieutenant Alfred Jagjeevan, a Pakistani Christian, would radio "We live for Pakistan and shall die for Pakistan!" as Indian bullets tore through his cockpit in 1948. Wing Commander Middlecoat; twice decorated with the Sitara-e-Jurat, plunged to his death in 1971 defending Karachi, his valor etched in the annals the state now edits.

In this pantheon of patriots stands Brigadier Samson Simon Sharaf, a Christian officer whose strategic brilliance in uniform was matched only by his searing critiques as a columnist; dissecting militarism with the scalpel-sharp precision he once reserved for battle plans. Beside him, Raja Tri Dewan, the Hindu diplomat who remained at his post during the 1971 cataclysm, negotiated in foreign capitals for a nation that would soon deny his people temples.

Major General Julian Peter fought at Burki beside Nishan-e-Haider recipients, while Air Vice Marshal Eric G. Hall redefined aerial combat in 1965, turning transport aircraft into bombers.

The Sikh community gifted Pakistan the soul-stirring music of Master Chandar Prakash, his sitar weaving Hindu-Muslim-Parsi melodies into the nation's cultural tapestry.

The Parsi industrialist Minocher 'Minoo' Bhandara championed interfaith dialogue even as mosques preached hate, while Dr. Ruth Pfau, the German-Pakistani nun, knelt in leprosy colonies, her medical kit a rebuke to state neglect.

Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy's Oscars forced the world to see the cracks in Pakistan's facade, and Helen Mary Roberts shattered glass ceilings as the Christian brigadier; proof that valor needs no theological validation.

Today, the descendants of these architects navigate a grotesque pantomime of belonging. Christian officers like Major General Noel Israel Khokhar; stood at the threshold of history in 2014, his promotion to Lieutenant General vanishing like a desert mirage. Yet men like Major General Moazzam Julian, commanding a commando battalion, still ascend through gathering shadows. Hindu civil servants' daughters vanish into forced conversions along the very routes their grandfathers paved. The Parsi graveyards that once held Karachi's memory are now real estate blueprints, their headstones repurposed as rubble.

Yet the state's betrayal unfolded with surgical precision. The same military that once saluted Christian war heroes now arms extremists burning and bombing churches.

Courts that elevated Rana Bhagwandas; the Hindu jurist who rose to Acting Chief Justice, now entertain blasphemy charges against his community. Schools erase Commodore Leslie Norman Mungavin's naval legacy while celebrating clerics who damn minorities as kafirs. The British founders' names; Gracey, Jefford, Keirn; are scrubbed from textbooks, their PMA auditorium a hollow monument to amnesia.

The statistics bleed silently: over 100 Christian martyrs across Pakistan's wars; 7 Sitara-e-Jurat gleaming on uniforms of the condemned; 1,000+ minority girls trafficked annually as "converts"; 26 churches torched in Jaranwala while police watched.

As the architects laid Pakistan's foundations, another constellation of Christian patriots burned with fervor for the newborn state.

Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram; matriarch of the Presbyterian-aligned Rallia Ram dynasty, penned letters to Jinnah since 1939, her ink flowing with the same conviction as her sons: Bihari Lal, who traded Congress for the Muslim League and drafted minority protections in Pakistan's Constituent Assembly; and Kundan Lal, the Rang Mahal

school principal who nurtured young minds for Jinnah's cause. Their mentor, Lala Chandu Lall, had already seeded the dream; co-founding Forman Christian College, where future founders would be forged.

In the crucible of 1947, Christian legislators became the decisive guardians of Pakistan's birth. When the Punjab Assembly convened to vote on Partition, Dewan Bahadur S.P. Singha; Speaker and scion of a Bihari-Bengali Christian lineage, confronted Master Tara Singh's kirpan on the assembly steps, roaring: "Seenay pay goli khain gay, Pakistan banain gay!" (We will take bullets to the chest, but we will build Pakistan!). Inside, Singha cast the tie-breaking vote alongside Cecil Gibbons (the self-proclaimed "Anglo-Muslim" who demanded Lahore for Pakistan) and Fazal Elahi (the Rawalpindi headmaster nominated by Jinnah himself). Their ballots; all Christian, tipped the scales: 91 for Pakistan, 88 for India.

Gibbons, later Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, fought for displaced Christians even as Pakistan forgot him. Chaudhry Chandu Lal Sundar Das secured Christian resolutions in Pathankot, while Samuel Martin Burke; the Martinpur-born foreign policy architect, secured Canada's backing for Pakistan's nuclear program.

And in a silent echo of this legacy, Lal Din Sharaf Sargodhvi's son Brigadier Samson Simon Sharaf would dissect nuclear strategy with the same analytical ferocity he once reserved for battlefields… Christian minds still mapping the nation's survival even as their churches burned.

Epilogue: *The Unmarked Graves …Seventy-seven monsoons have washed the blood from Partition's soil, yet the earth still heaves with the weight of unkept vows. In the ruins of a Lahore church, a scrap of hymnbook flutters beside a spent cartridge. At Karachi's defaced Parsi cemetery, Cowasjee's vandalized tombstone lies near the bulldozed grave of Dina Wadia; Jinnah's own daughter, exiled by the state her father forged.*

The ghosts gather now: Mandal clutching his resignation letter, Jagjeevan replaying his last transmission, Cornelius tracing vanished clauses of the Constitution. They whisper not to accuse but to awaken: You inherited a mosaic. You demanded an altar. Now you kneel alone in the temple of your making, praying to hollow idols of purity, as the last colors of your founders' dream bleed into the Indus and vanish forever.

…Concluded.

Dear Readers, you may find the original post above omitted certain heroes and their finer details. To do justice to this subject, a more thorough examination is required. My own notes, drawn from resources such as Christian defenders of Pakistan and Bharat Rakshak, merely begin to sketch the broader narrative. I invite you to enrich this canvas in the comments below, please share your own detailed references and accounts, so we may paint a more complete and worthier portrait together.

To share your reflections with the author please click here to go to comments section on the web.